

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*



## **Barnham CEVC Primary School**

### **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

At Barnham CEVC Primary School, a Thrive School of Excellence, we are committed to creating a nurturing environment where every child can flourish and reach their full potential, becoming *“the best they can be for themselves, for others, and for God’s world.”* We aim for all children to feel valued, respected, and secure as active contributors to our school community.

Barnham CEVC Primary School is an inclusive setting where the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of children are our highest priorities. Clear, respectful, and well-managed communication plays a vital role in safeguarding children, supporting families, and ensuring staff are able to work effectively and sustainably.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, governors, parents, carers, and professionals working with children on behalf of the school.

#### **Introduction**

Strong communication is central to positive relationships and effective school life. At Barnham CEVC Primary School, we value open, honest, and respectful communication with parents, carers, pupils, staff, governors, and the wider community.

Following review by the Governing Body, this policy sets out how communication will be managed in a clear and consistent way that supports positive outcomes for children, maintains professional standards, and protects staff wellbeing.

#### **Intent**

The intent of this policy is to:

- Ensure communication is clear, consistent, timely, and purposeful
- Promote positive and respectful partnerships with families and the wider community
- Set clear and reasonable boundaries around communication
- Protect staff wellbeing and work-life balance

***Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5***

- Ensure children's safety, wellbeing, and learning remain at the heart of all decisions

While we aim to be approachable and responsive, Barnham CEVC Primary School cannot provide 24/7 support. Clear expectations help ensure staff are rested, supported, and able to give their best to pupils during school operational hours.

On occasions, parents and carers may need to raise a complaint about the school. We take these complaints seriously and are committed to seeking to resolve any issues in a positive way and make identified improvements. To enable proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be raised in line with our complaints procedure outlined in the policy and brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible.

## **Definitions:**

### **Concern or complaint?**

A **concern** is defined as an 'expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A **complaint** may generally be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions or a lack of action.'

### **Definition of a Parent**

For the purposes of education law, section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for the child or young person (this could be but it not limited to step-parent, guardian or other relative)
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

A person has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

**'Headteacher'** also refers to any other title used to identify the headteacher, where appropriate or other members of the senior leadership team delegated to deal with the matter by the headteacher.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

To ensure effective communication, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined:

### **Headteacher:**

- Ensures that communication with parents is effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitors the implementation of this policy

**Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5**

- Regularly reviews this policy

#### **Staff:**

- Respond to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's acceptable use of ICT and internet policy.
- Respond to emails and telephone calls within five working days where possible
- Communicate professionally, respectfully, and promptly
- Exercise professional judgement to prioritise responses according to urgency and importance
- Ensure accurate records are kept of meetings and communications
- Follow safeguarding, confidentiality, and data protection protocols at all times

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours (8:30am-4pm) or within their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so and will not expect you to respond to them.

#### **Parents and Carers:**

- Keep contact information and medical information up to date with the school office to ensure receipt of communications
- Use appropriate channels for urgent and non-urgent communication
- Respond respectfully and provide relevant information promptly when requested
- Engage constructively in meetings and communications, focusing on the wellbeing and progress of the child

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8:30am-4pm) or during weekends or school holidays.

## **Implementation**

### **Official Communication Channels**

To ensure clarity, consistency, and safeguarding, the school uses the following agreed channels for communication:

#### **ParentMail**

Used for:

- Letters and formal communications
- Consent forms and trip sign-ups
- Payments, permissions, and notifications

**Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5**

Parents and carers are expected to regularly check ParentMail to stay informed.

### **Weekly School Newsletter**

- Issued weekly using a Canva-style template
- Celebrates learning, achievements, and school life
- Shares reminders, dates, and key information

### **School Website**

- Policies and statutory information
- Term dates and key school information
- Curriculum and school updates
- Important contact information

Parents should check the school website before contacting the school.

### **Social Media**

Official school accounts:

- Facebook: *Barnham CEVC Primary School*
- Instagram: *@barnhamcevc*

Social media is used to:

- Celebrate learning, events, and achievements

Social media is **not** used for:

- Individual communication
- Raising concerns or complaints
- Discussing individual children, families, or staff

Messages or comments sent via social media will not always receive a response.

### **Direct Contact**

- **Telephone:** School Office – 01842 890253
- **Email:** [admin@barnham.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:admin@barnham.suffolk.sch.uk)

Members of the Senior Leadership Team are usually available on the playground:

- Morning drop-off: 8:45am–8:55am
- Afternoon pick-up: 3:15pm–3:20pm

These times are intended for brief, informal messages. Matters requiring longer discussion should be arranged via the school office.

**Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5**

Meetings with staff can usually be arranged within **one calendar month**, except during August when school holidays may affect scheduling. Ordinarily, at least two staff members will be present to ensure accurate note-taking and clear recording of agreed actions.

### **Phone Calls**

We will phone parents in the following circumstances:

- First day calling if your child is absent without explanation
- Medical emergencies or illness which may need you to collect your child from school
- To discuss immediate concerns (including safeguarding, SEND or behaviour)
- To arrange collection following a suspension.

Teachers may also call parents to discuss pupils' performance (both positive and negative).

### **Official Written Reports**

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning including:

- An end-of-year report covering the child's achievement in each part of the curriculum and how well they are progressing alongside their attendance.
- Report on EYFS, phonic screening outcomes (year 1) and KS2 SATs test (year 6)

### **Meetings (virtual, in-person or hybrid)**

We hold parents' evenings in the autumn term and the spring term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, their child's wellbeing and any other area of concerns.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between these official meetings if they have concerns about a child's achievement, progress or wellbeing.

Parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or who have any other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings throughout the school terms.

### **Emergency & Routine Procedures**

Barnham CEVC Primary School distinguishes between urgent communications and routine updates:

#### **Emergency Communications:**

- Used for urgent information affecting school operations (e.g., snow days, closures, or health and safety incidents)

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

- Communication will be sent via all usual forms: ParentMail, social media (Facebook and Instagram), school website, and local radio announcements
- Local authority school closure information is also available on the Suffolk County Council website

### **Routine Communications:**

- General school updates, newsletters, and non-urgent information are shared via ParentMail, weekly newsletters, school website, and social media as appropriate
- Routine communications are not considered urgent and will follow the standard response times outlined in this policy

### **Procedures for Concerns**

Barnham CEVC Primary School has a clear chain of communication for concerns:

1. **Initial contact:** Parents and carers should email the school office (admin@barnham.suffolk.sch.uk), which will direct the message to the class teacher or relevant staff member.
2. **Escalation:** If the concern cannot be resolved at class teacher level, it may be escalated to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
3. **Further escalation:** In exceptional circumstances, unresolved concerns can be referred to the Governing Body.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's formal **Complaints Procedure**.

### **Code of Conduct**

All communication is expected to be respectful, professional, and non-inflammatory. This applies to both written and verbal interactions. We have a code of conduct for parents and visitors to our school (please see appendix)

### **Face-to-face Meetings:**

- Notes will be taken using either written records or a laptop/computer.
- Meetings will not be recorded using audio or video technology unless all attendees are aware and have consented.
- No photographs or videos of meetings will be taken without agreed consent.
- The school reserves the right to bring a meeting to a close if staff feel intimidated, threatened, or the meeting is conducted inappropriately.

This Code of Conduct applies to all parents, carers, staff, governors, and external visitors to ensure that all communications are professional, respectful, and safe.

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

## Accessibility & Inclusion

The school will ensure communication is inclusive:

- Documents provided in accessible formats on request
- Support for families with English as an additional language or with hearing/visual impairments
- Reasonable adjustments made to enable participation in meetings and school communication

## Remote Communication Guidelines

- All remote meetings follow the same professional standards and safeguarding expectations as face-to-face meetings
- Consent must be given before recording or taking screenshots
- Staff and parents should maintain professional behaviour and environment during video calls

## Staff Training

Staff receive guidance and training on:

- Effective communication with families and colleagues
- Handling concerns and complaints professionally
- Data protection and GDPR compliance

## Expectations for Parent and Carer Communication

To ensure communication remains manageable and supports staff wellbeing, parents and carers are asked to follow these guidelines:

- **Urgent matters:** Telephone the school office

***Urgent issues might include things like: family emergencies, safeguarding or welfare issues***

- **Non-urgent matters:** Email the school office
- **Information-sharing emails:** These will be noted where appropriate but may not receive a response
- **Emails requiring a response:** Staff will aim to respond within **five working days**, taking into account professional judgement and prioritisation
- **Telephone calls:** Staff will aim to return calls within **five working days**, with responses prioritised based on urgency and context

Parents and carers should not expect responses outside of reasonable school working hours (8:00am–5:00pm, Monday to Friday during term time). Although messages may be seen outside these hours, responding at those times can negatively impact staff wellbeing.

***Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5***

Parents and carers must also not arrive unannounced at the school demanding to see a member of staff under any circumstance.

Communication should always remain:

- Polite and respectful
- Focused on resolving concerns collaboratively

The school reserves the right to manage or restrict communication that is excessive, aggressive, or inappropriate, in line with its behaviour and complaints policies.

## **Staff Communication**

- Staff will communicate professionally, respectfully, and in line with the school's values
- Staff are not expected to respond to emails or messages outside working hours
- Internal communication will be managed through meetings, briefings, and agreed digital platforms
- Staff will exercise professional judgement to prioritise and respond to communications according to urgency
- Staff will follow safeguarding and data protection procedures at all times

## **Communication with Pupils**

Communication with pupils takes place through:

- Lessons and learning activities
- Assemblies and collective worship
- Pastoral sessions
- Appropriate school-approved platforms

All communication with pupils is conducted in line with safeguarding guidance and professional standards.

## **Governors and External Agencies**

Communication with governors and external agencies is managed through:

- Formal correspondence
- Governor Hub Platform
- Reports and documentation
- Scheduled meetings

This ensures accountability, confidentiality, and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

## Safeguarding Concerns and Reporting

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Concerns about a child's safety, welfare, or wellbeing must be shared immediately with the appropriate authorities and/or the school.

Concerns should **never** be raised via social media.

If a child is in immediate danger, call **999**.

For a child living in Norfolk:

- **Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS):** 0344 800 8021
- **Norfolk County Council Customer Services:** 0344 800 8020
- **Police (non-emergency):** 101

For a child living in Suffolk:

- **Customer First (Children's Social Care):** 0808 800 4005
- **Professional consultation line:** 0345 606 1499
- **Police (non-emergency):** 101

National Support

- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000
- **Childline (for children and young people):** 0800 1111

The school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (Amy Arnold, Rachel Bacon, and Rhonda Tasker) should also be informed of any safeguarding concerns relating to a pupil at Barnham CEVC Primary School using the agreed communication channels.

## Impact

Through this policy, Barnham CEVC Primary School aims to:

- Maintain effective, respectful, and transparent communication
- Reduce unnecessary pressure on staff outside working hours
- Protect staff wellbeing and professional boundaries
- Ensure children remain the central focus of all communication
- Strengthen trust and partnership across the school community

## Data Protection and Confidentiality

All communication will comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal and sensitive information will be shared securely and only with appropriate parties.

**Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5**

The school will share pupil-related information only with a child's parent(s) as defined above or with adults holding parental responsibility as defined by the Children Act 1989. Information will not be disclosed to relatives, family friends or other third parties who do not hold parental responsibility unless written consent has been provided by a person with parental responsibility or disclosure is required or permitted by law.

Where court orders, care arrangements, or legal restrictions apply, the school will comply fully with those orders and will require appropriate legal documentation before sharing information.

## **Monitoring, Feedback and Review**

The school will monitor communication effectiveness through:

- Parent and staff surveys
- Feedback collected during meetings
- Review of response times and escalation procedures

Feedback will inform updates to the policy or practice.

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

<b>Review Term:</b>	Every two years
<b>Led member of staff responsible for review:</b>	Amy Arnold (Headteacher)
<b>Lead governor responsible for review: (Full GB to approve)</b>	
<b>Date adopted:</b>	
<b>Dates policy reviewed</b>	
<b>Dates policy amended in between reviews</b>	

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

## Appendix

**BARNHAM CEVC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*Parent, Carer and Visitor  
Code of Conduct*

Barnham CEVC Primary School is a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing church school community. We believe children thrive and achieve their best in a safe, supportive environment built on mutual respect, trust and strong partnerships between home and school.

High standards of behaviour are expected from pupils, and staff are expected to act professionally at all times. The positive support of parents and carers is essential and greatly valued in maintaining our caring and respectful school community.

This Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors has been adopted by the Governing Body of Barnham CEVC Primary School. It outlines the conduct expected of all parents, carers and visitors while on school premises or when interacting with members of our school community. Its purpose is to ensure that our school remains a safe, positive and respectful place for everyone.

This code should be read alongside the school's Communication Policy, Complaints Policy and relevant safeguarding procedures, which are available on the school website.

## Expectations

**We expect parents, carers and visitors to:**

- Respect the Christian values, ethos and caring culture of our school
- Work in partnership with staff for the benefit of all children
- Treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect
- Use appropriate language and behaviour at all times
- Raise concerns through the appropriate school channels in a calm and respectful manner
- Seek clarification from school staff where there are differences in accounts of events to help achieve a peaceful resolution
- Support the school's behaviour policy and promote good behaviour in their own children

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

# Behaviour That Will Not Be Tolerated

**To maintain a safe and positive school environment, the following behaviours are not acceptable:**

- Disruptive or aggressive behaviour that interferes with the operation of the school
- Approaching or confronting another parent's child regarding incidents between children (concerns should be raised with staff)
- Using loud, offensive or abusive language, including shouting at staff, parents or pupils
- Threatening behaviour towards any member of the school community
- Physical or verbal aggression towards adults or children, including physical punishment of a child on school premises
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, staff, pupils or parents, including on social media
- Damaging or destroying school property
- Smoking, vaping, consuming alcohol (unless authorised at a school event) or taking illegal drugs on school premises
- Taking photographs or videos on school grounds without permission
- Sending abusive or threatening emails, messages or social media communications to members of the school community
- If concerns cannot be resolved reasonably and respectfully, the school reserves the right to take appropriate action, which may include restricting access to the school site. In serious cases, external agencies, including the police, may be involved.

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

# Code of Conduct for Meetings

**All meetings with school staff must be pre-arranged in accordance with the school's Communication Policy. This ensures that appropriate time is allocated, relevant staff are available, and discussions can be conducted in a calm, private and productive manner.**

**Parents, carers and visitors should not attend the school site expecting or demanding an immediate meeting with staff. School staff have teaching and safeguarding responsibilities throughout the day and are not always available without prior arrangement.**

## **All attendees are expected to:**

- Treat others with courtesy and respect at all times
- Use appropriate and professional language
- Listen without interrupting and allow others to speak
- Focus discussions on the child's wellbeing, progress and best interests
- Follow the guidance of the meeting chair
- Unless for a medical reason or prior agreed adjustment, all attendees are expected to remain seated throughout the meeting to ensure a calm and non-confrontational environment.

## **Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices**

- To ensure meetings remain professional, focused and respectful, all mobile phones and electronic devices must be switched to silent and put away for the duration of the meeting. Devices should not be placed on the table or used during discussions unless required for an agreed purpose.
- Phones must not be used to record audio, video or take photographs during meetings unless explicit consent has been given by all participants in advance.
- If a participant is expecting an urgent call due to a medical or exceptional circumstance, this should be communicated at the start of the meeting.

## **Please be aware:**

- Notes will be taken during meetings using written records or a laptop/computer.
- Meetings will **not** be recorded using audio or video technology unless all attendees are aware and have given explicit consent.
- No photographs or videos of meetings will be taken without agreed consent from all parties.
- The school reserves the right to bring a meeting to a close if staff feel intimidated, threatened, or if the meeting is conducted in an inappropriate or disrespectful manner.

*Jesus said 'I am the vine; you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them, will bear much fruit.' John 15:5*

## **Social Media Use**

- The use of social media to publicly criticise or make allegations about the school, staff, pupils or other parents is not acceptable and is not in the best interests of children or the wider school community.
- Concerns should always be raised directly with the school so they can be addressed fairly and appropriately.
- Libellous, defamatory or abusive posts may be reported to the relevant platform and, where appropriate, further action may be taken.
- Cyberbullying involving members of the school community will be treated as a serious matter and dealt with in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

## **Thank you for your support and understanding**

We thank all parents, carers and visitors for their continued support in upholding the values and expectations of Barnham CEVC Primary School.

We kindly ask that anyone collecting your child on your behalf is made aware of this Code of Conduct.

**We Inspire, Cherish and Believe**  
in each person that they might flourish  
and fulfil their potential